

19 February 1954

Memorandum For: Lawrence R. Houston

Subject : CIA Medals

1. The CIA Honor Awards Board has recommended that Executive Order 9817 of 30 December 1946 be utilized as authority for the award of medals for service by CIA employees. You have been requested to advise the DCI, via  as to your interpretation of Executive Order 9817.

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2. In my opinion this Executive Order may be utilized as authority for the award of medals for exceptional and meritorious service, including valor, by CIA employees. Section 5 of the Executive Order provides as follows:

"A department may provide for the purchase and award of appropriate certificates, medals, or other emblems, in honorary recognition of service which is determined by the head of the department to be exceptional or meritorious."

The Executive Order in turn is based upon the authority of section 14 of Public Law 600 which authorizes the head of each department, under such rules and regulations as the President may prescribe, "...to incur necessary expenses for the honorary recognition of exceptional or meritorious service..."

3. You will remember when the subject of awarding the Medal of Freedom by the Director was discussed with the Bureau of the Budget, Mr. Titus of the Bureau of the Budget suggested that we get in touch with a Mr. Burtner of the Department of Justice. Apparently, Mr. Burtner's function is to pass upon the legal aspect of

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 TO DIRECTOR'S OFFICE  
 BY MEMORANDUM  
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Executive Orders. To confirm my opinion of our present problem, I called Mr. Burtner's office and in his absence put the question to a Mr. Lazowska. Mr. Lazowska subsequently called back to give his unequivocal, but informal, opinion that this Agency could award medals for any form of meritorious service, specifically including valor, and that a special appropriation would not be needed to provide funds for this purpose. It would be my opinion, therefore, that we may inform the Director that the procedure recommended by the Honor Awards Board is legally permissible.



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Remarks: The attached memorandum seems to establish clearly the Director's authority to provide for and award the medals recommended by the Career Service Board. You will note this has the informal blessing of the Department of Justice

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